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Disarmament Commission

Official Records

193rd Meeting

Monday, 15 May 1995, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun . . . . . (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.35 a.m.

Opening of the session

The Chairman: I declare open the 1995 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Statement by the Chairman

The Chairman: It is indeed a great honour to welcome representatives to the 1995 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission. I wish to express once again my gratitude to all the members of the Commission for the honour they have bestowed on me and on my country by electing me to guide our deliberations this year. My special thanks go to the group of Asian States for nominating me to this highly responsible post.

On behalf of the Commission, I take pleasure in paying tribute to my predecessor, Ambassador Mongbe of Benin, and to the members of his Bureau for the dedication and skill with which they conducted our negotiations during the last year.

I also welcome Mr. Davinić, Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, and Mr. Kuo Chung Lin, Secretary of the Commission, whose support for and service to the Commission will be, as always, essential for the success of the session.

The 1995 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission begins its work at a highly propitious moment in disarmament history. The just-concluded Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), for all its ups and downs, adopted decisions which will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the entire disarmament process. It is to hoped that the three interlinked decisions — on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, on the strengthening of the review process of the Treaty, and on the indefinite extension — will constitute a proper basis for the future effective and comprehensive implementation of the Treaty, bringing the world closer to the ultimate objective of achieving, at the earliest possible date, the cessation of the nuclear-arms race and nuclear disarmament.

The overall success of the NPT Review and Extension Conference should not, however, obscure our vision with overoptimistic expectations, especially in view of the inability of the main bodies of the Conference to come to an agreement on the review of the operation of the Treaty in a number of critical areas. Nevertheless, the Chair believes that a lot of ground was traversed during the Conference, which will, hopefully, have a positive bearing on the work of our Working Group I dealing with nuclear disarmament. With perseverance and sustained efforts, coupled with the necessary good will and readiness to strike a proper balance, I hope we will be able to conclude our work on this item this year.

The Disarmament Commission is to continue to discuss, for the second consecutive year, an item on international arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991. The Chair hopes that this year the Commission will make substantive progress on this important issue, basing itself on

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the deliberations and working papers presented by the Chairman of the Working Group and by various delegations.

The third item the Disarmament Commission is to deal with at this session is the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade. Let me express my hope that the mid-term review that is to be accomplished during this session will in no small measure be facilitated by the outcome of the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

We have a full and complex agenda that will have to be dealt with in a session that is shorter in duration this time. It goes without saying that the shortened session will require redoubled efforts on the part of all delegations if we are to finish our work in good time.

The Chair will do its best to bring this session to a successful conclusion, and I pledge my support and cooperation to all my colleagues in the Bureau, and especially to the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, on whose shoulders lies the brunt of our work.

Our task is made a great deal easier by the dedicated and efficient staff of the secretariat, on whom the Bureau and, indeed, all of us will greatly rely.

The year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, if it is to herald a turning point, needs clear-sighted statesmanship, unflinching courage and, above all, political will, and it is my conviction that the Disarmament Commission can and will make its own contribution to the world community's efforts in the name of peace, prosperity and disarmament.

Adoption of the agenda

The Chairman: If I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to adopt the provisional agenda for this session, as contained in document A/CN.10/L.36.

The agenda was adopted.

Organization of work

The Chairman: As members may recall, in 1990 the Disarmament Commission adopted by consensus a text of the reform programme, entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" (A/CN.10/137). The implementation of this reform programme was duly reflected in the organizational arrangements for this current substantive session at the Commission's organizational session. The arrangements included: firstly, the approval of the provisional agenda; secondly, the establishment of three Working Groups, one on each of the three substantive agenda items; thirdly, the appointment of Chairmen for the Working Groups; fourthly, a decision on the date and duration of the 1995 substantive session; and, fifthly, a general programme of work for the current session.

However, there is a follow-up matter regarding the appointments to the chairmanships of Working Groups I and III. On Working Group I, I have been informed by the Chairman of the Group of Latin American and Caribbean States that Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodríguez, Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations, has been nominated to the post of Chairman of Working Group I on agenda item 4, entitled "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons".

Accordingly, if I hear no objection, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to appoint Ambassador Valencia Rodríguez of Ecuador as Chairman of Working Group I.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: Moreover, I have been informed by the delegation of Nigeria that Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari has been nominated by his Government to the post, already allocated to Nigeria by the Africa Group, of Chairman of Working Group III, on agenda item 6, entitled "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". Accordingly, I shall take it that it is the wish of the Disarmament Commission to appoint Ambassador Gambari as Chairman of Working Group III.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: I extend my warm congratulations to Ambassador Valencia Rodríguez of Ecuador and Ambassador Gambari of Nigeria on their appointments as Chairmen of Working Groups I and III.

In addition, I wish to report to the Commission that the Chairman of the Group of Eastern European States has nominated Belarus and Poland for vice-chairmanships of the Commission for 1995. Accordingly, if I hear no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to elect Belarus

and Poland as Vice-Chairmen of the Commission by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: In view of the limited time available to the Commission, it was the general understanding that there should be a limited general exchange of views allowing delegations to make statements on any or all agenda items. In this regard, two meetings have been allocated for this purpose, as indicated in the general programme of work and the weekly timetable. I would like to urge those delegations wishing to make general statements to place their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible. The speakers' list will be closed at 1 p.m. today.

If there is no objection, I shall take it that the Commission wishes to proceed in this manner.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: As to the allocation of time for each agenda item, the principle of equal footing and flexibility for practical purposes will be observed; the secretariat will issue a weekly timetable on the programme of work during the session, taking into account the needs of each subsidiary body as indicated through consultations with the Chairmen of the Working Groups.

As members may recall, at our organizational session it was understood that item 4, on nuclear disarmament, and item 6, on the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, would be concluded at the 1995 session. In this connection, it should be noted that the document entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission" states that

> "If no agreement can be reached on a specific agenda item, the report of the Commission should contain a joint statement or a Chairman's summary of the proceedings to reflect views or positions of different delegations, particularly in the case of those agenda items to be suspended for a period of time". (*A/CN.10/137, section 3, para. 4*)

Therefore, a heavier workload for Working Groups I and III is anticipated. I would like to appeal to all delegations to make every effort towards the faithful implementation of the provisions of the reform programme, which was adopted by consensus, and to conclude agenda items 4 and 6 as decided.

Moreover, in view of the fact that two items will be concluded this year, it might be advisable for member States to discuss possible subjects to be included on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission next year. In this regard, I intend to hold a meeting of the Committee of the Whole on Monday, 22 May 1995.

As members may recall, a general programme of work (A/CN.10/1995/CRP.1) for the entire session has been agreed upon and circulated as an indicative timetable for the work of the Commission, subject to further adjustment as necessary. The Secretariat has prepared and distributed the working timetable for the first week of the session. As pointed out earlier, the programme of work for the second week will be decided upon by the Bureau in consultation with the Chairmen of the Working Groups towards the end of the first week.

I would like to appeal to all members of the Disarmament Commission to be punctual in attending all scheduled meetings of the Commission in order to utilize efficiently the available conference resources.

Regarding documentation for the current session, I wish to point out that the report of the Disarmament Commission to the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly (A/49/42) and the documents listed in that report, particularly the Chairman's paper in the annex to the report, will serve as important background documents for this session.

Previous reports of the Commission, of course, will also be useful for reference. Since there are three items which will be the subject of intensive deliberations at this session — particularly item 6, which is a new one — the Commission may have before it a number of working papers submitted by delegations on those subjects. I would like to urge those delegations to submit their papers to the secretariat as soon as possible for processing.

As was the case in previous years, non-governmental organizations are welcome to attend, as observers, the plenary meetings and the meetings of the Committee of the Whole of the Disarmament Commission.

As we have now considered various aspects of the organization of work for the session, I shall now call on those delegations that wish to make general statements on various subjects contained in the agenda at this stage.

General exchange of views on the three substantive agenda items

Mr. Amorim (Brazil): I should like first of all to express my satisfaction at seeing you, Sir, a diplomat whose skills and experience in the disarmament area are well known, as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission. You can count on the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation.

This session of the Disarmament Commission takes place at a time which is especially convenient for taking stock of our accomplishments and challenges and for devising plans for the future. 1995 is not only the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations; it marks also the fiftieth anniversary of a fateful event: the introduction and use of nuclear weapons, whose elimination was the main goal of the very first resolution of the General Assembly, resolution 1 (I) of 24 January 1946. This session of the Disarmament Commission will be the first opportunity for a multilateral forum to examine a broad range of disarmament issues, including nuclear disarmament, after the conclusion a few days ago of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

The observer delegation of Brazil followed closely and with great interest the important questions discussed during the NPT Review and Extension Conference, which are of great relevance to the entire international community. I should like to seize this opportunity to sketch briefly the essence of Brazil's views on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

We are of the view that the international community can, by means of a series of concerted efforts, further develop the regime for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Our intention is to contribute to a non-proliferation regime that is as comprehensive and balanced as possible.

Brazil's commitment to nuclear non-proliferation is indisputable: Brazilian society, through its elected representatives, decided in 1988 to include in its Constitution the provision that nuclear energy shall be permitted only for peaceful purposes. At the international level, our non-acquisition of nuclear weapons is guaranteed by the 1991 Guadalajara Agreement with Argentina, the Quadripartite Agreement on comprehensive safeguards between Brazil, Argentina, the Brazilian-Argentine Agency for Accounting and Control of Nuclear Materials and the IAEA, and the Tlatelolco Treaty. We expect that the Tlatelolco Treaty will be in force in the near future for the totality of its zone of application. In this regard, I should like to extend a special welcome on behalf of Brazil to the recent decision by the Cuban Government to sign the Treaty of Tlatelolco.

The States which do not possess nuclear weapons and have entered into agreements such as the NPT and the Tlatelolco Treaty expressly renounce the acquisition of the most destructive weapon of all. They all accept adequate safeguards to that effect. In return, they ought to be accorded legally binding assurances — such as those given under Protocol II of the Tlatelolco Treaty — to the effect that, pending the achievement of nuclear disarmament, their national security will not be endangered through the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

After the indefinite extension of the NPT, the main responsibility should fall upon those States which bear the privilege and the burden associated with the possession of nuclear weapons. They have accepted the legal obligation to pursue good-faith negotiations towards nuclear disarmament until this is finally achieved. In this context, my delegation noted the statement by United States Vice-President Gore to the effect that the Treaty did not create a permanent class of nuclear-weapon States.

The international community as a whole expects that nuclear- weapon States will be pushing forward with wide-ranging disarmament measures. The commitments undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States must be promptly translated into deeds. In the opinion of the Brazilian delegation, the deliberations of the Working Group on agenda item 4 on the process of nuclear disarmament, must be oriented towards the future. We should not waste our time by repeating the acrimonious debate over what has or has not been achieved so far: we must concentrate on what can be done to achieve nuclear disarmament as soon as possible.

In this context, we welcome the adoption by the Parties to the NPT of points 3 and 4 of the principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, which include, *inter alia*, the determined pursuit by the nuclear-weapon States of systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goal of eliminating these weapons.

We can focus therefore on the intermediate steps which will be necessary in order to reach this common goal. There seems to be growing agreement on several of

these steps, such as continued compliance with existing arms control and disarmament treaties; the provision by nuclear-weapon States of legally binding security assurances as called for in General Assembly resolution 49/73; ratification by the United States and the Russian Federation of the START II Treaty; measures to increase transparency in nuclear weapons and fissile-material stockpiles; measures to ensure that the current nuclear arms reductions are made irreversible; negotiation of further nuclear arms reductions, with the full participation of all nuclear-weapon Powers; a comprehensive test-ban treaty, without exceptions or loopholes, forbidding all nuclear tests in all environments and for all time; a fissile-materials cut-off treaty which should ban the production of fissile material for explosive purposes, thereby freezing and gradually reducing all military and non-safeguarded stockpiles; and adherence to nuclear-weapon-free zones and other regional commitments on denuclearization by regional States, and adherence to relevant protocols by nuclear-weapon States.

Several regions are proving in practice that it is possible to conduct international affairs without relying on nuclear weapons. In this context, it is a real possibility that the Tlatelolco, Rarotonga and Antarctica Treaties, together with the South Atlantic zone of peace and cooperation and denuclearization treaty and other nuclear-weapon-free-zone treaties yet to be concluded, could eliminate the dangers associated with nuclear weapons from a vast area covering more than half the surface of the globe, including the whole southern hemisphere. It would be an encouraging consequence of this process to see the whole southern hemisphere acknowledged as a nuclear-weapon-free zone by the international community. The Disarmament Commission should also examine several other constructive proposals, such as those contained in resolution 49/75 E on the step-by-step reduction of the nuclear threat.

As regards the other two items on our agenda, the Brazilian delegation will present its contribution in the context of the relevant Working Groups. On agenda item 5, the Chairman's working paper on guidelines for international arms transfers prepared last year under the leadership of Ambassador Luis Fernando Jaramillo of Colombia, will be an excellent basis for our work. On agenda item 6, my delegation is ready to cooperate on a constructive and action-oriented review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): Mr. Chairman, let me first say how pleased my delegation is to see you in the Chair, guiding our deliberations. We are confident that under your stewardship the Commission will be able to achieve substantive progress at this session. I should also like to extend my sincere congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their election.

No one can deny that the most important issue confronting the world today is the question of the elimination of nuclear weapons and the achievement of nuclear disarmament. In this and other forums in the past, Indonesia is on record as emphasizing the urgent need to initiate multilateral negotiations on this issue which is the collective responsibility of all nations; the negotiations would elaborate the stages of nuclear disarmament, including the responsibilities of the nuclear-weapon States and the role of the non-nuclear-weapon States in such endeavours. At the same time, we stress the need to adopt a comprehensive approach consisting of an all-encompassing and mutually supportive set of measures within which nuclear disarmament should be pursued.

The process of nuclear disarmament will necessarily require both vision and realism in approaches to it, and also sustained efforts on specific proposals. That is why my delegation has also endorsed a comprehensive programme of nuclear disarmament within a phased, time-bound framework. This would necessarily involve the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, as strongly urged by a vast majority of States. Symbolically and practically, it would demonstrate the recognition that international security cannot be attained through the unending quest for sophisticated weapons. The early conclusion of a non-discriminatory, multilateral, international and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production and stockpiling of weapon-grade fissile material is also a critical component. To demonstrate recognition of their obligations, the nuclear-weapon States should initiate negotiations on further deep cuts that would set a timetable for the elimination of all nuclear arsenals.

The existence of nuclear weapons and their qualitative and quantitative development directly and fundamentally jeopardize the vital security interests of nuclear and non-nuclear States alike. It is an accepted fact that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to the survival of mankind. The present international situation lends further credibility to the long-standing demands of an overwhelming majority of Member States for further urgent measures to be taken for the elimination of nuclear weapons. As the Ministerial meeting of the non-aligned countries held in Bandung last month declared, in the post-cold war era there is no justification — if there ever was any — to maintain nuclear arsenals, much less develop new ones which imperil humankind.

The advent of nuclear weapons has also made it incumbent upon the international community to undertake a collective review and reappraisal of the relationship between armaments and security. In the nuclear age, the valid approach is through a comprehensive and stable system of international security within the framework of the United Nations. It is only through the complete elimination of nuclear weapons that global security can be ensured.

As the Commission is expected to complete consideration of this agenda item during this session, my delegation believes that it will be possible to finalize guidelines and recommendations, thereby providing further impetus to the efforts to reduce nuclear armaments and thus contribute to the objective of the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The question of arms transfers has long been a critical element in global political and military matters. The acquisition of large quantities of conventional arms represents an unconscionable misuse of scarce resources. In this context, we have long viewed the availability of relevant information as an essential prerequisite to overcoming apprehension, promoting more open military policies and facilitating the process of disarmament. We also fully recognize the need to curb the production and transfer of armaments, given the global prevalence of conventional armaments and the mounting expenditures involved, without impinging upon the need for ensuring the self-defence capabilities of all States.

The issue of the illicit transfer and acquisition of armaments has assumed alarming proportions and has profound ramifications. The suffering of civilian populations and other devastating consequences can no longer be ignored. Equally disturbing is the potential of such transfers and requisitions to further disrupt national stability, regional peace and international security. Hence, there is a continuing need to take a collective look at this problem in order to focus on ways and means through which an international consensus can be reached.

In this context, my delegation believes that the conventional-weapons Register cannot deal with the clandestine nature of such activities, and calls for more concerted actions and measures, especially in the context of conflict-ridden areas. These would include, *inter alia*, more effective control over national armament import and export policies; greater coordination at the subregional, regional and global levels; harmonization of relevant laws and regulations; and enforcement measures.

Finally, my delegation believes that, with the ongoing transformations in the global political climate, a window of opportunity has opened to achieve security at lower levels of armaments. Hence, halfway through the Third Disarmament Decade, there is a clear and urgent need to reassess our thinking on and approaches to disarmament. The Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade under General Assembly resolution 45/62 A calls for a broad range of disarmament issues to be dealt with and is intended to accelerate the disarmament process. Halfway through the decade, we have witnessed the conclusion of the Treaty on intermediate-range nuclear forces and START I and II Treaties; the biological weapons Convention and the chemical weapons Convention; agreements on the reduction of conventional armaments and armed forces; and the indefinite extension of the NPT.

This period also saw a process of gradual transformation of military structures. We welcome the broadening and deepening of disarmament: far from mere regulation of armaments and the arms race, agreements now include the destruction of existing arsenals and the limitation of future production.

Yet in many other critical armament areas, the international community has made neither initiatives nor substantive progress. Nuclear disarmament remains as elusive as ever, as demonstrated during the just-concluded NPT Review and Extension Conference. The qualitative improvement in nuclear-weapon capabilities has continued unabated. Progress in the establishment of zones of peace has continued to elude us. The use of outer space for exclusively peaceful purposes remains in doubt. Meanwhile, non-military threats to security have yet to be fully addressed. In sum, the lofty goals set by the Third Disarmament Decade will at this pace remain far from realization, and we call for concerted efforts to achieve them.

In this, the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Organization, it is incumbent upon us all to commit ourselves to further enhancing the effectiveness of the machinery and procedures of the multilateral disarmament process for dealing with the multitude of issues confronting the international community. The Indonesian delegation firmly subscribes to the view that the Disarmament Commission can make a constructive contribution to progress towards the goal of nuclear disarmament, and believes that the importance of the Commission's work must be emphasized. We pledge our continuing support in our common endeavours to enhance the Commission's role in multilateral disarmament efforts.

Mr. Jurschewsky (Canada): May I offer you my sincere congratulations, Sir; I promise you and the members of the Bureau the support and full cooperation of the Canadian delegation as you carry out the important work of the Disarmament Commission over the next two years.

In recent years the international community has made impressive gains in the field of disarmament. Agreements to limit and then reverse the proliferation of many types of weapon are being reached at a faster pace than ever before. Among other important developments, we have completed the chemical weapons Convention, created the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and extended the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) into the indefinite future — all in the last five years.

Today, we look forward to completing a comprehensive test-ban treaty by 1996, strengthening the Convention on biological and toxin weapons, negotiating a "cut-off" treaty and rejuvenating the Convention on certain conventional weapons. And, in 1997, we will embark on an enhanced review of the NPT, this time armed with clear principles and objectives.

In the coming two weeks, the Disarmament Commission will consider three items, each significant in its own way. The first item, nuclear disarmament, will be considered for the last time. It is useful that we wrap up this item, now that the all-important decision on the extension of the NPT has been taken and the road to the future has been charted out by the Conference that has just concluded. The Conference, which many of us attended, was a useful and invigorating experience that reaffirmed Canada's commitment to nuclear disarmament. On this item, then, the Disarmament Commission can now provide the last word and end its consideration.

The item on the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade will give us the opportunity not only to review our accomplishments to date, but also to look to the future in a systematic manner.

The third item, illicit trafficking in small arms, will challenge us the most. This subject is undoubtedly important. It is regrettable, however, that to date so much of our time has been taken up with debating the appropriateness of this subject for consideration by the Commission — regrettable, but perhaps unavoidable.

Canada continues to have questions as to whether this item should be considered by this body or by another. None the less, I have no doubts about the seriousness of this matter or the urgent need to address it. That said, my delegation is prepared to consider proposals on this issue.

I believe that the discussions of the next two weeks will prove interesting and rewarding. My delegation looks forward to the detailed work to come in each Working Group.

Mr. Gambari (Nigeria): The Nigerian delegation congratulates you most warmly, Sir, on your unanimous election to preside over our deliberations at this session. We are pleased to be working under your able guidance, and we assure you of our total support. My delegation feels sure that, under your leadership, this session will have a very successful outcome.

There are three items on the agenda of the Disarmament Commission. None of the three is new to any of us. Besides, we were able to make significant progress only a few days ago, when the most important multilateral disarmament agreement was made a permanent norm guiding the behaviour of States in the most critical area of arms control and disarmament. My delegation's views on the items on our agenda were expressed in detail at the recently concluded NPT Review Conference. We believe, however, that the flexibility shown by many States and, indeed, the sacrifices of others in continuing to respect that norm for the behaviour of States, especially in nuclear-arms control and disarmament, should, despite their disagreements over the approach to be taken, be an incentive to all States to abandon rigid positions on important disarmament issues so as to enhance the security of all States, large and small, nuclear and non-nuclear alike.

We therefore expect to see, at this session of the Disarmament Commission, positive changes in attitude on the part of nuclear-weapon States — and all developed States — towards issues that concern the security of developing States. Consensus should not be blocked on the vital issues that we have on our agenda.

With the majority decision in favour of the indefinite extension of the NPT and the reaffirmation of the objective of ultimately achieving a world free of nuclear weapons, the Disarmament Commission should reiterate the commitment of States to the full implementation of the provisions of the NPT, including the very important article on nuclear disarmament at an early date. The wish of the majority of States for an effective mechanism to ensure more tangible progress in nuclear disarmament must be

acknowledged, and translated into a consensus document in order to enhance the much-needed universality of the Treaty. The universality of the Treaty and the equitable distribution of the obligations and responsibilities of its States Parties form the only viable basis on which sound international law governing nuclear disarmament can be built.

In addition, we strongly urge that a comprehensive test-ban treaty be concluded without further delay. Similarly, there should be a cut-off in the production and stockpiling of fissile materials for weapons use.

At the last session of the Disarmament Commission, when we started deliberations on the item of international arms transfers, we expressed the view that there was a need not to limit our discussion to illicit transfers, but also to look at transfers in a holistic manner, because the line between licit and illicit transfers is really not clearly defined. Many other States also expressed that view. We hope that our work at this session will take full account of such views as we proceed with work to harmonize the different national criteria for the export and import of arms. We expect too that cognizance will be taken of agreements by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session in its resolutions on arms transfers.

With regard to the third substantive item, on the review and appraisal of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, Nigeria is of the view that significant progress has been made in the pursuit of the goals identified in the Declaration, but that more remains to be achieved between now and the end of the Decade. Opportunities abound for global cooperation towards arms control and disarmament, and we must make full use of them. In this regard, we would like to see the Working Group identify further ways of fully meeting the goals in the Declaration which, if possible, it should submit for further consideration at the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which has been planned for 1997.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I call on the representative of the United States of America, who has a question of an organizational nature.

Mr. Akalovsky (United States of America): I did not hear the draft programme of work being submitted for adoption. Has it been adopted or not? To my knowledge it has not. But I should like to raise a question in connection with the proposed programme of work. As the Chairman has indicated, we have two items on the agenda that have to be completed at this session: nuclear disarmament and the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade.

Looking at the proposed work programme, we find that there are eight meetings devoted to nuclear disarmament, six meetings to international arms transfers and only two meetings devoted to the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade during this week.

This seems to us to be rather unbalanced, especially given the fact that we have to complete two items. Therefore, either we should revise the programme for this week or else we should devote much more time to the third item on the agenda next week so as to be able to complete both items by the end of next week.

I have one other point. In your opening remarks, Mr. Chairman, you indicated that you planned to have a meeting of the Committee of the Whole to deal with next year's agenda. This does not seem to us to be the proper procedure. As we all know, the agenda for next year is to be decided at our organizational session in the light of possible informal consultations that might take place between this substantive session and the organizational session next December. Therefore, to formally discuss questions relating to the agenda of the Disarmament Commission for next year at this session appears to us to be inappropriate.

My delegation certainly could not possibly object to any informal consultations that the Chairman or others might want to conduct on this subject, but to have a formal discussion in a Committee of the Whole or otherwise appears to us to be improper.

The Chairman: Let me recall that the informal paper on the working timetable for this week is not supposed to be officially adopted by the Commission. It is an informal paper that was agreed upon by the Chairmen of the three Working Groups. This was done with the consent of them all. It is my understanding that Working Group III, which deals with the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade, wishes to have the meetings start only by the end of this week because of certain preparations that are needed for the beginning of the Group's work. The programme of work and the working timetable are only indicative, and are for the benefit of delegations only.

As for my intention to hold informal discussions — not formal discussions — on a possible new item for next year, of course I am in the hands of the Disarmament Commission, and whichever way the Commission wishes to proceed on this matter would be acceptable to me and the Bureau. I am mentioning this only because this year we are going to finish two items, and I think it would be a good idea if delegations could prepare themselves or, if they have any specific suggestions in that respect, could informally discuss them. If there is a consensus, they could discuss this issue formally later on.

I had no intention whatsoever of prejudging this issue. I hope that satisfies the representative of the United States.

Mr. Akalovsky (United States of America): I appreciate your explanation of the status of the paper containing the proposed programme of work, Mr. Chairman. Your comments seem to indicate that next week's schedule will be quite different in terms of the allocation of time to different items. So on that basis, of course, my delegation will have no further comment on this subject.

As to the other problem, the point is that, even if we have these discussions in a Committee of the Whole, the item will be formally discussed. I know that the Committee of the Whole has no records, but it is a formal meeting of the Commission, and it would be unprecedented, so far as I know, to have a formal meeting of whatever kind during a substantive session devoted to the subject of the agenda. So, frankly, my delegation will still have problems with this approach.

I would suggest that if the Chairman wishes to gather the views of delegations as to possible items for next year's agenda, or if other delegations want to discuss them, that he should have informal contacts or consultations on the subject rather than obtain views through a meeting of the Committee of the Whole.

The Chairman: I shall certainly bear in mind the comments of the representative of the United States in this regard.

Mr. Hoffman (Germany): First of all, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship. I am sure that, under your leadership, we will be able to finish our work on the two items, as we must. We will, of course, support you in this.

It is true that I was consulted on the work schedule. We agreed that next week the work schedule would be quite different and that Working Group II would have much less time available to it. It would probably also be nice for representatives to see the work programme for next week now, so that they can prepare themselves better for their tasks this week and next.

On another matter, I should like to refer to the remarks of the representative of the United States. I seem to remember that we had discussions in the Bureau during the Disarmament Commission organizational session on what the items for the following year might be. This was then continued in discussions with those representatives present in New York. I must say that I would like to have these discussions here because I am present here now. We also did this in October and November in the margins of the First Committee, and we should do the same this year, because when the Geneva people have not been present, surprises are sometimes later sprung on us which I, for my part, do not much like.

The Chairman: Let me react right away to what the representative of Germany has just said. I was contemplating the preparation of the working timetable for next week on the basis of what would transpire at the beginning of this week. I do not believe that it would be easy for us to have the second week's timetable right away. We have to see how the work of the Working Groups proceeds during the first two or three days in order to come up with a viable programme.

As I said, it was my intention, either on Thursday or Friday, to have a Bureau meeting to discuss the new items and the timetable for the next week. But of course I am in the hands of the Commission, and I would abide by its decision as to how we should proceed on this particular matter.

Mr. Jurschewsky (Canada): I wish to express my support and appreciation for the programme of work that you have developed, Sir, and for how you have proceeded to elaborate on it with respect to next week. It strikes me as a practical and logical way of proceeding.

Secondly, with regard to the opportunity with which you intend to provide us to discuss new agenda items, I think that this is a valuable suggestion that we should take up as a means of furthering discussion and refining our thinking on the subject. We know, of course, that this matter will be decided by the General Assembly this fall, but it strikes me that that should not be a barrier to delegations expressing their views and refining their ideas here.

The meeting rose at 11.35 a.m.